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Prospects for Tunisia

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PROSPECTS FOR TUNISIA

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THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS, EXCEPT AS NOTED IN THE TEXT.

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The Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the intelligence organization of the Department of State.

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The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
SCOPE NOTE	1
KEY JUDGMENTS	3
DISCUSSION	7
Significance for the United States	7
January 1984 Riots: A Watershed	7
A Self-Inflicted Wound	7
The Economic Roots of Social Discontent	8
Sources of Economic Discontent	8
Economic Outlook	9
Prospects for Further Unrest	10
Bourguiba—The Problem	10
The Regime's Response	10
The Opposition	11
External Intervention	13
Succession to Bourguiba	15
Potential Successors and Likely Policies	15
The Role of the Military	16
Outlook	17
Annex A: Instability Indicators	21

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SCOPE NOTE

This Estimate examines Tunisia's political, economic, and societal problems, the likelihood of further unrest, and the prospects for President Bourguiba's regime over the next two years. Given Bourguiba's stature in Tunisia, questions regarding stability had tended to focus on the post-Bourguiba era. The January 1984 bread riots, however, illuminated a more pressing question—will the state survive Bourguiba's continued reign? The youthful populace and the disadvantaged do not perceive the regime or the ruling Destourian Socialist Party as responsive to their needs and aspirations. Libyan-supported subversion and the Islamic resurgence add to the regime's challenges. This Estimate addresses the implications for the United States in the event of domestic upheavals which produce a new government, and examines alternative scenarios.

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KEY JUDGMENTS

Prospects for more political instability in Tunisia are high:

- President Bourguiba has shown no inclination to address fundamental economic, social, and political grievances that trouble many Tunisians. Bourguiba's mental and physical capabilities are declining—he recently entered a hospital suffering from heart spasms—but the 81-year-old President shows no sign of stepping down voluntarily. His continued rule will stifle desperately needed change and increase the likelihood of violent change.
- Although many Tunisian leaders recognize the need for reforms, they are unwilling to confront Bourguiba directly. Instead, many officials are content to adopt measures that appear responsive to the public, but fail to meet growing public demands for real change.

Given Bourguiba's inflexibility, the subservience of his officials and the decline in political institutions, Tunisia's future is likely to be increasingly turbulent, although we do not think the regime will be toppled as long as Bourguiba remains alive and in control. Nevertheless, the boiling point for dissension may have been substantially and permanently reduced; future unrest may be touched off by a far less momentous event.

Opposition forces, while growing in strength, are not well organized. The legal, secular opposition seeks only an expanded role in the decisionmaking process and a broadening of the political process. The illegal opposition—particularly the Islamic fundamentalists—is growing, but remains poorly organized, factionalized, and publically committed to nonviolent change.

The likelihood of serious instability and chances for an abrupt change in regime will increase greatly once Bourguiba dies, however. His constitutionally designated successor, Prime Minister Mzali, has little popular support. Many of Tunisia's elite—clan patriarchs, government officials, and party leaders—fear that the unpopular Mzali's accession would trigger widespread unrest and ultimately threaten their wealth and positions in Tunisia. Thus, Bourguiba's heart spasms precipitated vigorous efforts to encourage the President to alter the constitutional succession procedure or to replace Mzali as Prime Minister.

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The President has long hoped that his son, Habib, Jr., would replace him; however, the latter has previously opted out of the contention. The cause of Minister of Public Works and Housing Sayah is also being pressed. Such a substitution might smooth the way for succession in the post-Bourguiba era; however, it offers little hope of reform to the disadvantaged and alienated, who will view the power struggle as the elite's attempts at protecting itself. As long as Bourguiba retains his grip on power, substantial change cannot be expected, and this will increase the pressure for violent change. For his part, Prime Minister Mzali will intensify efforts to garner support.

Bourguiba's death in office and the uncertainty surrounding the succession process would give Islamic fundamentalists and secular radicals opportunities to extend their influence and perhaps take over the government. Younger Tunisians—about 70 percent of the population is under 26—and the growing number of unemployed are increasingly turning to the fundamentalists and would probably be willing to support them in a succession crisis. Bourguiba's secular policies and the Westernization of the privileged classes have given Islamic fundamentalism credibility among the disadvantaged and alienated. Although the strength of the Islamic Tendency Movement—the most prominent fundamentalist group—is difficult to measure, its appeal to the youth is evident and is likely to increase. The Movement's more radical members are well placed to exploit discontent.

Moreover, the turmoil likely to surround the succession process would offer external actors—particularly Libya—chances to interfere in Tunisian politics. Libya's Qadhafi remains intent on developing a Tunisian dissident organization capable of fostering armed revolt. While he has had little success to date, if he does develop such an organization, it could provide him with the pretext for invasion.

The Tunisian military, traditionally apolitical and under tight civilian control, may become a significant factor in the succession process. Although uneasy with riot-control duties, the military has obeyed civilian direction, and we believe it will continue to do so while Bourguiba is in power. The military could potentially become the dominant element in choosing Tunisia's next leader.

The military's role in the succession process will depend on how that process unfolds. If the succession process proceeds smoothly and according to law, we doubt that the Army will intervene. In the face of prolonged instability or unrest generated by squabbling over the succession, however, the military could feel compelled to intervene—provided it does not fragment—and take power. Moreover, the possibility of a coup by radical younger officers cannot be ruled out.

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Within the near term, Prime Minister Mzali is the strongest candidate as Bourguiba's replacement, provided the constitutional process operates. Barring a serious miscalculation, Mzali is likely to retain Bourguiba's confidence. Should Mzali lose his office, possible alternatives—other than Public Works and Housing Minister Sayah—include Destourian Socialist Party (PSD) Director Baccouche and Foreign Minister Caïd Essebsi.

Tunisia's relations with France and the United States would not change substantially under Mzali or any other PSD successor. Political reality will force the successor to rely upon and maintain relations with Tunisia's traditional friends. Tunisia will have to adhere closely to the broad Arab consensus on regional issues; however, under Mzali or another PSD figure, Tunisia would be likely to remain a voice of moderation in Arab and nonaligned fora.

From the US perspective, the most favorable scenario would be a peaceful transition to a constitutional successor government dedicated to widening the political process and correcting inequities. A broad-based government of national unity would be an acceptable alternative, but such a regime would have great difficulty operating effectively over the longer term. A military-controlled government might prove the only one capable of ensuring stability; however, it would be no more desirable than a civilian regime and no more adept at solving Tunisia's problems.

The accession of an Islamic fundamentalist government would reduce Western influence; however, an eventual modus vivendi with the United States and the West could be possible. Such a regime would probably prove less harmful to US interests than a radical leftist regime.

Finally, the seizure of power by a patently anti-Western regime would adversely affect US interests in the Maghreb and beyond. Such a development would be widely perceived as a severe blow to US prestige and policies. Should such a regime perceive itself weak and threatened by the United States and the West, it might turn to the USSR with ominous implications for vital US and Western security interests.

Tunisia's economic woes, partly the product of the international recession, will remain a problem throughout the decade. Oil revenues probably will decline slowly, and the growth in worker remittances from abroad will be slight. The prospect of worker migration to Europe and the wealthier Arab states, a traditional relief valve for excess labor, is declining. At the same time, economic growth in Tunisia cannot accommodate the 3.8-percent annual increase in the manpower pool. Tunisia increasingly will be unable to afford the large foreign exchange expenditures for food imports. Thus, increased agricultural productivity will be crucial to future balance-of-payments stability.

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Petroleum production, a mainstay of the economy, probably has peaked at 120,000 barrels per day. Although production from fields still under development should allow overall oil production to approximate current levels over the near term, the rapid growth of domestic requirements will cut into net oil export volume. Tunisia will probably become a net oil importer by the end of the 1980s, further worsening the financial pressures. The troubled financial picture, coupled with the elite's unwillingness to share its wealth or broaden access to economic opportunities, will increase the difficulty of reallocating resources to neglected economic sectors.

The USSR's principal interest in Tunisia is to neutralize its pro-Western orientation and to maintain and expand access to port facilities—part of an overall objective of expanding regional access. Moscow must view the Bourguiba succession issue and other domestic problems as opportunities to advance Soviet political and military interests. Although there is no evidence of overt Soviet destabilization efforts, Moscow would clearly benefit from the damage to Western interests that might proceed from a radical change of regime in Tunisia. Libyan subversive activities against Tunisia also serve Moscow's longer term interests.

Unable to keep pace with Libyan and Algerian military modernization and expansion, Tunisia's military goal has been to develop only a force capable of delaying an invading army until foreign assistance arrives. The Bourguiba regime has forged tacit security relationships with France and the United States and, more recently, improved ties with Algeria to counter the Libyan threat. Algiers would respond to a Tunisian request for assistance. Likewise, France would employ its armed forces to repulse any encroachment of Tunisian sovereignty. An unequivocal French and US commitment to Tunisia's security remains the best guarantee against direct Libyan aggression.

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DISCUSSION

Significance for the United States

1. Tunisia, the smallest of the North African countries, possesses a geostrategic, political, and symbolic importance disproportionate to its size, population, and resources. Tunisia occupies a strategic location in the central Mediterranean, flanking the 90-mile wide Strait of Sicily—a potential choke point for sea lines of communication. It possesses ports, airfields, and other facilities potentially useful in support of US and NATO military operations. From the perspective of US contingency planning and transit rights, enhanced access to Tunisian facilities would be a valuable adjunct to US bilateral arrangements with Egypt and Morocco.

2. Perhaps even more important than potential Western access is denial of Tunisian assets to the USSR. Although the Soviets will probably expand their access to Libyan naval and air facilities eventually, Moscow would certainly welcome improved access to Tunisia.¹ Thus, emergence of a Tunisian regime hostile to the West might be exploited by the USSR, with ominous implications for the United States, NATO, and regional states.

3. Tunis has been a spokesman for moderation and dialogue in international fora, seeking cooperative relationships between the Third World and the West. Tunisia has generally supported US policy objectives—while criticizing our tactics—especially with respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

4. Since the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, however, Tunisia has sought to reduce its public identification with the United States, which is perceived by many Tunisians as opposing Palestinian and Arab interests. Nevertheless, Tunis regards Washington as a friend, one on whom it relies for protection—along with France—from external aggression.

5. Ethnic, religious, and historical affinities contribute to Tunisia's importance in its regional context. Its structural problems—high population growth, rising

expectations, internal tensions, authoritarianism, and Islamic fundamentalism—are shared to varying degrees by Algeria, Morocco, and numerous other Middle Eastern and African states. Indeed, the January 1984 riots were stimulus, in part, for subsequent unrest in Morocco. Should the Bourguiba regime or a constitutional successor collapse, it would have a long-term impact on Maghreb's balance of power and regional stability. If a Libyan hand were evident, it would enhance Tripoli's leverage over weaker African governments, whose confidence in their Western supporters would be seriously shaken.

January 1984 Riots: A Watershed

A Self-Inflicted Wound

6. The January 1984 riots were precipitated by an abrupt, 100-percent increase in the price of bread, a vital commodity for Tunisians. It was a catalytic event that has increased pressures for political and economic reforms. The episode clearly underscored serious deficiencies within the government, the ruling party, and society in general. The regime's inept handling of its decision to eliminate subsidies provided the spark that touched off the riots.

7. Unlike the heightened tensions that preceded the violent demonstrations of January 1978,² the 1984 riots were a spontaneous explosion of anger, which tapped latent but deep-seated frustrations among the disadvantaged and the alienation of the restive, youthful population.

8. There is no evidence of any external role in the disturbances. Islamic fundamentalists may have had a hand in organizing the disturbances, and some elements sought to exploit the situation and incite the crowds to acts of violence. Their capacity to react to unfolding events suggests that they were better organized and prepared than other Tunisian opposition elements.

¹ Since mid-1977, Tunisia has permitted the USSR to use facilities at the Menzel Bourguiba shipyard, however, neither this arrangement nor economic aid agreements with Moscow have altered Tunisia's basically pro-Western stance.

² The disturbances on 26 January 1978 in Tunis and other cities, which accompanied the country's first general labor strike, were a reflection of unresolved political, economic, and social stresses. Most of these pressures continued, without amelioration, into the 1980s.

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9. The January riots highlighted Tunisia's many structural problems, including:

- The aging President, who retains a stranglehold on decisionmaking, is increasingly unable to accept changes in institutions he created.
- Cabinet and other senior government officials are unwilling to defy Bourguiba, despite the evident need for reforms.
- The ruling Destourian Socialist Party has lost touch with the populace it claims to represent. It is perceived by many Tunisians as merely a vehicle for the personal aggrandizement of party members.
- Members of the ruling elite are split by power struggles as they jockey for position in the post-Bourguiba era.
- Regional favoritism and political corruption have promoted inequities in the distribution of development resources.
- Ostentatious display of wealth as a status symbol contributes to popular perceptions of rampant corruption.

The Economic Roots of Social Discontent

10. The January bread riots reflected the serious strains in Tunisian society caused by fundamental political, economic, and social problems. Regional disparities were underscored when disturbances first erupted in poor southern towns that have not experienced the same rise in living standards as Tunis and the cities of the "Sahel," the eastern coastal area. While the coastal cities have been favored by the development of tourism, commerce, and the oil industry, the rural south and west have suffered from the government's neglect of agriculture. As a result, about one-third of the adult male population in rural areas is unemployed. Average income in the south is as much as 40 percent below that of the Sahel and Tunis.

11. The economic imbalance between the coast and the interior has caused many southern and western Tunisians to leave the countryside and settle in urban slums. Being unskilled, they often remain unemployed or restricted to menial labor. Many such migrants were among the rioters in Tunis; this pool of idle, disillusioned poor could again vent their frustration violently.

12. The economic disparities between regions are exacerbated by political differences. Bourguiba's secular, pro-Western vision of Tunisia has generally had

less appeal in the south, where French influence was weaker than along the coast. The regime has tended to suspect the south for supporting Salah Ben Youssef, a pan-Arabist and rival of Bourguiba in the 1950s. The south is further alienated by the government's domination by the middle and upper classes from the Sahel and Tunis. Bourguiba is from the coastal town of Monastir, as have been all his Prime Ministers.

13. Compounding Tunisia's regional disparities are generational differences. About 70 percent of all Tunisians are under 26. The youthful population has grown up knowing only President Bourguiba's rule and does not remember the struggle for independence. Its members regard the aging Bourguiba with indifference, Mzali with contempt, and consider most government officials to be corrupt. Very few youths join the ruling Destourian Socialist Party, while the Islamic fundamentalists attract many youthful adherents.

14. Young Tunisians are particularly hard hit by unemployment. Roughly half of all Tunisian college applicants fail the entrance examinations and join the ranks of the unemployed. Even those who do graduate from college often cannot find employment commensurate with their education. This breeds further frustration among a group already cynical and unsupportive of the status quo.

15. Social and economic development and the highest adult literacy rate in North Africa (62.5 percent) have created rising expectations among the population that the Tunisian system is increasingly unable to satisfy. Efforts to bolster the government's legitimacy by nostalgic reminders of Bourguiba's struggle against the French leave the youth unmoved.

Sources of Economic Discontent

16. Tunisia's economy (a mixture of state ownership, private enterprise, and cooperatives) prospered and the standard of living markedly improved during the 1970s. In sharp contrast, the past few years have been disappointing. Tunisia's main sources of foreign exchange earnings—petroleum, tourism, phosphates, and worker remittances—languished in the wake of the international recession. Real GDP growth has averaged only 3.7 percent since 1979—about half the level of the previous four years. Austerity measures were implemented in 1983 to cope with poor economic performance and dwindling revenues. Another poor grain harvest and soft oil market conditions, however, frustrated government efforts to right the economy.

17. Petroleum, a mainstay of the economy, accounts for 45 percent of export earnings, about 21 percent of government revenues, and 16 percent of

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GDP. Production probably has peaked at 120,000 barrels per day. Problems in the main oilfields, El Borma and Ashtart, will cause production from developed fields to decline further. While production from fields still under development should allow overall oil production to remain near current levels in the near term, the rapid growth in domestic petroleum consumption will cut into net oil export volume. The offshore boundary dispute and political tensions between Tunisia and Libya have been major obstacles limiting government efforts to develop areas that hold the best chances for augmenting petroleum production. Tunisia probably will become a net oil importer by the end of the 1980s.

18. Declining receipts from tourism and a drop in worker remittances offset the marginal improvement in the trade balance in 1983. Last year's current account deficit of \$630 million—about 8 percent of GDP—showed no improvement over the sharply higher deficit of 1982, despite austerity measures. The current account deficit projection for 1984 probably will top \$1 billion. Foreign exchange reserves have been drawn down by 36 percent since 1983 and now cover less than one and a half months of imports.

19. Budget problems have reached troubling proportions as the government attempts to maintain development and social spending in a period of stagnant revenues. Efforts to trim expensive food subsidies triggered the national riots in January. Bourguiba's subsequent decision to roll back subsidy cuts added \$140 million to direct budget outlays in 1984—not including the heavy indirect cost of extensive riot-caused damage.

20. The riots' economic and political repercussions have forced the government to finance growing deficits through foreign borrowing. Debt service costs on Tunisia's total debt of \$4.4 billion consumes about a quarter of receipts from exports of goods and services. Tunisia probably will have to rely on commercial lenders for additional funds at substantially higher cost. The prospect of a rapidly rising debt service burden has caused some officials to explore the need for debt relief over the next several years.

21. Economic growth has been insufficient to accommodate the 3.5-percent annual increase in the nation's labor force. Declining prospects for emigration to Europe and wealthy Arab states—a traditional release valve for excess Tunisian labor—have helped push unemployment and underemployment to 30 percent in urban areas.

22. The government has purchased labor tranquility at a high cost by implementing wage and price

policies that have significantly increased real incomes. Tunisia's labor movement now appears to expect major annual pay increases. While recent wage hikes should help to contain worker demands in the near term, the government will be hard pressed to walk the line between fiscal prudence and labor discontent over the next several years.

23. Agriculture remains a bottleneck in the economy. Past neglect and inefficient pricing policies on domestic farm products have led to poor performance. Although employing one-third of the population, agriculture accounts for only 15 percent of GDP. Real growth probably will be slight in this sector during the next several years. Food imports already meet about 50 percent of domestic demand.

Economic Outlook

24. Tunisia's financial position will remain a problem for the rest of the decade. Oil revenues probably will decline slowly, and growth of worker remittances—which supplied \$345 million in foreign exchange in 1983—will be slight. The government will have to aggressively pursue new markets for Tunisian labor, textiles, and agricultural products that face quotas in Europe. Increased agricultural productivity is crucial to future balance-of-payments stability as the nation will be increasingly unable to afford large foreign exchange expenditures for food imports. Steps are being taken to increase fertilizer use, to improve credit availability, and to rationalize pricing policies, which should stimulate productivity. Weather will remain the major obstacle to capitalizing on the nation's large agricultural potential.

25. The economic and political ramifications of the January riots make it difficult for Prime Minister Mzali to balance the expectations of Tunisia's burgeoning population, military modernization goals, and dwindling domestic resources. The gap between consumption and production will increase unless sensitive food subsidies are trimmed. Inflation probably will again reach double-digit levels as price controls are relinquished. Austerity measures will have to be continued to achieve economic stabilization goals. Unless substantial concessional assistance becomes available or the US dollar weakens against the dinar, additional international borrowing will be necessary. A rapidly mounting debt service burden would adversely impact on the government's ability to sustain improvements in the standard of living. Although public reaction to recent subsidy reductions has been subdued, further impending price hikes on price controlled goods probably will generate labor and consumer unrest.

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Prospects for Further Unrest

26. The riots marked a change in Tunisia. For the first time the population was able to force the regime to reverse its position. Tunisians may now recognize their potential to influence events. Obviously, the regime's vigorous suppression of the riots and its subsequent tough law-and-order stance will act as a deterrent to further violence. Inertia is also a powerful factor in Tunisian society.

27. The likelihood of widespread disturbances and antiregime activities will be conditioned by numerous factors, including:

- The degree of control exercised by the President, which will depend on his physical health and mental acuity. The government's capacity for flexibility could vary with Bourguiba's lucidity and the ability of subordinates to manipulate his decisions.
- The manner in which the government responds to public grievances.
- The willingness of the upper and middle classes to accept the redistributive measures that will be necessary to improve the lot of the disadvantaged. The World Bank estimates that the top one-fifth of the population controls 45 percent of the wealth, with the lowest two-fifths controlling only 15 percent of the nation's resources. Given diminished resources, change can occur only at the expense of benefits now enjoyed by privileged classes or regions of Tunisia. However, scarce economic resources and growing financial difficulties are likely to prevent the government from satisfying rising popular expectations even if it persuades the upper and middle classes to accept economic sacrifices.

Bourguiba—The Problem

28. President Bourguiba's age and leadership style preclude significant changes in Tunisia's declining institutions.

29. The President has maintained a hold on power; his reaction when anyone has attempted independent

action has dampened any further initiative and cowed his subordinates. His style has been paternalistic, highly personal, and autocratic. Even Prime Minister Mzali, who runs the government's daily affairs, holds office on the President's sufferance. As long as he is capable, Bourguiba will set the general policy direction, will assert his authority, and will seek to preserve unchanged the institutions he created, despite the need to adapt to new conditions.

he still makes decisions. Bourguiba's continued rule will further stifle change and increase the long-term prospects for a revolutionary change in Tunisia.

30. Although Bourguiba remains the symbol of Tunisian nationalism, and the struggle for independence, this is increasingly irrelevant to the young, restive population. Prudence precludes assuming that Bourguiba's presence can calm the crowds indefinitely. His personal authority may prove insufficient should large-scale violence erupt again. Tunisia's best interests would be served if Bourguiba were to relax his grip on the nation and allow needed reforms; however, this is an unlikely development.

The Regime's Response

31. If President Bourguiba remains the ultimate voice in decisionmaking over the next two years, there is little reason to expect a reversal of institutional decay. In the event of his death or incapacitation, Tunisia's leadership will be caught up in the succession struggle and the reapportionment of power long monopolized by the President. Only after these issues are resolved will the elite be prepared to consider overdue reforms. Their desire to protect vested interests will also militate against a substantial reordering of society. With or without Bourguiba, the regime's options will be narrowed by economic constraints, which will complicate efforts to redistribute resources on a more equitable basis.

32. In the aftermath of the riots, Prime Minister Mzali set out to strengthen his position by appointing followers from the Sahel region—his and the President's power base—to key government positions. To retain his position as heir designate to the Presidency, Mzali will have to retain Bourguiba's confidence. This will induce caution on Mzali's part. At the same time, he must appear responsive to win support from the populace. Thus, the revised 1984 budget reflects increased funding for development projects in the neglected interior regions. Measures to improve the infrastructure, agricultural production, living stand-

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ards, and job opportunities are designed to stem the flow of the poor and unemployed to the already crowded cities. Further purges of government and party officials, especially the most disliked or demonstrably inept, can be anticipated; this will also give the appearance of responsiveness. Bold, new initiatives appear to be ruled out, however.

33. In the unlikely event conservative upper and middle classes accept the economic sacrifices necessary to ease the plight of the disadvantaged, the situation might stabilize even in the absence of political reform. Unfortunately, Mzali has not done an effective job of selling the need for new tax measures to the middle class, an important party constituency. They perceive the new luxury taxes as aimed at their assets, rather than those of the wealthy. The middle class would rather sacrifice the privileges of the rich than accept an increased burden on themselves. They also fear that the government is prepared to squeeze them harder rather than risk a new confrontation with the poor and alienated.

34. The regime's legitimacy rests increasingly on the perception of its performance as an instrument for economic development, social justice, and political participation. By objective standards, most Tunisians are better off than a decade ago; however, many perceive the regime to be a failure. The regime does not yet face an organized challenge in the streets; poor Tunisians want their needs met, not revolution. The leadership of the principal Islamic opposition, the Islamic Tendency Movement, generally is reform minded, cautious, and nonviolent. The legal secular opposition parties are primarily interested in broadening the political process and a stake in decisionmaking. Nevertheless, a failure to redress grievances will increase political ferment and the radicalization of the better educated youth. This will provide a fertile field for exploitation by the more radical, action-prone elements among the Islamic fundamentalists as well as Libyan-sponsored subversion. The regime still has some time, but it is shortening. If it proves unwilling or unable to heal the nation's ills, it will ultimately confront more violence.

35. The regime will proceed cautiously to avoid triggering new problems. Should widespread violence erupt again, the government will rely initially on the Interior Ministry's security forces;

The January riots, which tested the internal security forces, revealed serious deficiencies in leadership, training,

manning levels, and equipment inventories; performance was mixed. Prime Minister Mzali retains the Interior Minister portfolio to ensure responsiveness and oversight. Expansion of selected units and modernization of equipment will occur within budget constraints. More important, professional Army officers, reputedly competent and hard line, have been placed in charge of the internal security forces. If these measures are well implemented, the law enforcement arms will prove more effective in containing future unrest.

36. Should the internal security forces need reinforcement, the Army will be deployed. Although uncomfortable with this role, the senior and middle grade officers are loyal to duly constituted authority and the concept of constitutional government. By law, training, and habit, the Army has remained apolitical. Senior and middle-grade officers have a strong stake in stability and the system which has provided ample perquisites and rewards. They are also part of the establishment that produces the government and party elite.

The Army will remain obedient, unless employed repeatedly to rectify the failures of inadequate political leadership.

The Opposition

37. The Sahel, Tunis, and Sfax regions historically have competed for leadership of Tunisia. President Bourguiba's government and the Destourian Socialist Party (PSD) are based on the Sahel, while the legal opposition parties generally draw their strength from the Tunis area. Similarly, the hierarchy of the principal trade union movement is drawn primarily from Sfax. This reflects a traditional preference of Tunisian leaders for drawing trusted lieutenants from their birthplaces, clans, and regions. Although such practice is not questioned by most Tunisians, it tends to strengthen regional divisions and erodes the development of a national identity; it has also contributed to favoritism of some regions in the allocation of development resources. This tendency inhibits development of an effective coalition of opposition parties and movements—already divided by diverse goals and strategies—although they have taken tentative steps to overcome their differences.

38. Since its founding 50 years ago, the PSD has evolved from a genuine mass movement into an arm of the regime serving the interests of the elite. The

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party's rhetoric that it represents all Tunisians has no credibility with the populace. Since independence, Bourguiba has generally denied opposition movements status as legal political parties and alternately co-opted or suppressed them. He has effectively manipulated opposition movements, temporarily favoring one group to undercut the threat posed by another; for example, the Islamic fundamentalists were used to lure support from the Communist Party of Tunisia (PCT) in the 1970s. When the PCT subsequently lost popularity and support, it was allowed to become the first legal opposition party in November 1982. Recognizing the political potential of Islam, the secular regime will not permit the fundamentalists legal status as a religious-based political party. In a show of political tolerance, Bourguiba permitted two other movements, the Socialist Democratic Movement (MDS) and one faction of the Movement of Popular Unity, legal status in November 1983. Even the opposition parties are tainted in popular perceptions, however. Poor Tunisians regard them as only another face of the resented middle and upper classes. Like the PSD, the legal opposition parties failed to anticipate the popular reaction to the bread price increase, which demonstrated their own alienation from the populace at large.

39. Denied legal existence and harassed, most opposition movements have not been able to develop a great deal of strength. Nevertheless, several groups have the potential to influence significantly post-Bourguiba-era politics; these include the disaffected liberals, trade unionists, and Islamic fundamentalists. Other opponents of the regime, such as a second faction of the Movement of Popular Unity, Ba'thists, Nasserites, and several extreme leftist groups, [redacted]

[redacted] have

little following in Tunisia. [redacted]

[redacted] An uprising by Libyan-trained Tunisian dissidents could provide the pretext for Libyan military intervention, especially in the post-Bourguiba era.

40. The MDS, led by Ahmed Mestiri, is the most important of the legal opposition parties. Its membership is a collection of former government officials and members of the PSD—expelled in the early 1970s—who draw their support largely from the professional middle class. The Social Democrats are reformers who

favor working within the existing system to accomplish their aim of political pluralism. They believe pluralism offers the best hope of countering the threat of Islamic fundamentalism that flourishes, in part, because of the limited legitimate channels for dissent. At the first Party Congress in mid-December 1983, the MDS adopted a platform that stipulated that the party would be guided by the principles of democracy, socialism, and the Arab-Islamic character of the Tunisian body politic. Mestiri would be prepared to work with any other faction, including the Islamic fundamentalists, interested in legal transformation of political life. The MDS could serve as the focus of efforts to build a moderate leftist-labor coalition to challenge the PSD in the post-Bourguiba era. It is highly unlikely that the regime, certainly as long as Bourguiba is in control, would offer the MDS any significant participation in the government, such as a Cabinet portfolio. At present, the MDS does not represent a challenge to the regime.

41. Although not a political party, the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT) rivals the PSD in size, organization, and longevity. Following independence, the UGTT was successfully used by Bourguiba as an instrument of support for his far-reaching social and economic programs. Over the last decade, however, the UGTT gradually became strong enough and sufficiently broad based to challenge the government and the PSD on economic issues. It has been weakened by the same generational conflicts and internal feuds evident in the PSD. Like Bourguiba, UGTT leader Habib Achour is two generations older than most of his constituency; the latter, more politically aware, prefer collegiality over Achour's autocratic ways. To reduce internal squabbling and eliminate opposition to Achour, the UGTT's Executive Bureau was purged in November 1983; however, those ousted formed the National Union of Tunisian Workers (UNTT) under the leadership of Achour's chief opponent, Abdelaziz Bouraoui. The fact that Bourguiba apparently sanctioned the splinter movement was viewed by the UGTT as a provocative act; however, in the aftermath of the riots, the regime and the UGTT concluded an April 1984 agreement designed to ease labor unrest and improve social peace. This pact, which sidetracked a developing regime-union collision, may provide a breathing spell in which both sides can reassess their strategies. [redacted]

Although the UGTT can ill afford too close identification with the regime, the existence of the smaller, more docile UNTT will prevent Achour from pressing

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the regime too hard. The UNTT, for its part, is likely to prove important only as a wedge which the regime can employ to split labor unity. The UGTT will continue to prepare to take advantage of the power struggles that will attend Bourguiba's demise.

42. Bourguiba's secular policies and the increasing Westernization of the middle and upper classes have given Islamic fundamentalism credibility and appeal among the disadvantaged and students. The regime is vulnerable to the exploitation of social and political unrest by those who present Islamic values as a refuge in time of change and turmoil. If the government fails to make needed reforms, the result is likely to be growing fundamentalist strength and an increase in radical tendencies.

43. Tunisia's Islamic fundamentalists are gaining strength and have become more active since Ayatollah Khomeini's takeover in Iran in 1979. Most of the fundamentalists are organized under the umbrella of the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI), whose relatively moderate platform reflects efforts to satisfy a spectrum of Islamic philosophies. The leaders have consistently maintained that they wish to cooperate in a legal context; however, the government's condition—that the movement act as a secular political party—is unacceptable. The MTI professes to reject violence, to favor a pluralistic approach and the rights of other political parties, and to reject links with foreign powers.

The MTI leadership seeks a return to the more conservative doctrines of Islam to halt the perceived moral decay brought about by Bourguiba's strongly secular policies. The MTI remains an essentially underground organization, whose numerical strength is uncertain; however, its appeal among the youth is evident at the University of Tunis where it appears to be the most influential group.

44. Although its stated goal is evolutionary change, the MTI's more radical members are well placed to exploit discontent, clearly demonstrated in the January riots. Continuing efforts by the Tunisian security forces to check fundamentalist activity have failed to stem its appeal. Countermeasures, including arrests, beatings, and harassment, merely strengthen the hand of those fundamentalists tempted to use violence. Should repression stiffen, it would only drive the movement further underground and exacerbate the leaders' efforts to restrain their radical members.

Several extreme fundamentalist groups, which favor replacing the secular government with a religious one, exist; however, they appear to be a relatively unimportant component in Tunisia.

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External Intervention

46. Since independence, Tunisia's principal foreign policy concern has been to protect itself from its larger neighbors, Libya and Algeria. Tunisia's fears of Libya were confirmed by the 1980 Gafsa raid by Libyan-sponsored Tunisian dissidents. Unable to keep pace with Libyan and Algerian military expansion and modernization, Tunisia's military goal has been to develop armed forces capable of delaying an invading army until foreign assistance arrives. The Bourguiba regime has forged tacit security relationships with and acquired virtually all of its arms and training from France and the United States. More recently, Tunisia has sought better relations with Algeria to counter Libya.

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47. Libya's Qadhafi, who has vowed to topple moderate Arab regimes, will seek opportunities to exploit Tunisia's domestic problems. The Libyan military will remain an important tool in support of Qadhafi's activist foreign policy in Africa. Although Libya is capable of offensive operations against weaker neighbors like Tunisia, a capacity to conduct major, sustained combat operations against Algeria—much less French or US military forces deployed to Tunisia—will remain beyond Libya's grasp in the 1980s. This fact, internal unrest in Libya itself, and Qadhafi's efforts to project a moderate image, should serve to temper Qadhafi's overt aggressive intentions toward Tunisia. At this juncture, the Libyans lack the services of a prominent Tunisian who could serve as a rallying point for a Libyan-influenced, post-Bourguiba regime; this is likely to remain a crucial deficiency for Libya.

48. Libya is not well regarded in Tunisia except in the south—an area long neglected by Tunis—where

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historical tribal and trade relationships exist. Over 60,000 Tunisians are employed in Libya, which affords Tripoli some political and economic leverage over Tunis as well as ample cover for Libyan subversive activities, such as training of Tunisian dissidents. Qadhafi is intent upon developing a dissident infrastructure capable of armed revolt upon Bourguiba's demise. The Libyan leader has numerous pressure options, short of overt military attack. These include the use of Libyan media to incite unrest and spread disinformation in Tunisia; the deportation of some or all of the Tunisian work force, which would facilitate infiltration of dissidents en masse and add to Tunisia's unemployment and economic problems; the use of Libyan diplomatic facilities and personnel for antiregime activities; and the posturing of Libya's armed forces along the border, which might involve overflights of Tunisia.

49. A Libyan invasion would succeed only if the Tunisian situation were sufficiently chaotic to facilitate a rapid defeat of the Tunisian armed forces before external help arrived. It is doubtful that Libya could marshal sufficient forces in advance of an invasion without revealing its preparations. This would provide time for Tunisia's allies to signal their opposition. An unprovoked Libyan invasion remains at least conceivable; however, it would entail military, political, and other risks Qadhafi probably would be unwilling to take.

50. Qadhafi apparently prefers a scenario in which the Tunisian dissidents rebel and request Libyan intervention; he presumably believes this scenario, which would provide a pretext for Libyan action, would offer greater prospects for success. The Tunisian military remains less concerned about an overt Libyan invasion—it expects Tunisia's friends to help—than a confused situation which Libya might seek to create or exploit. The military views the latter as the more likely contingency, one which could present Tunisia's friends, especially France and the United States, with difficult decisions. If the Tunisian security and military forces appeared capable of reasserting control, Libya probably would not invade on the ground, although Libyan airstrikes might occur. Although the USSR would probably caution Libya against overt military action, Libya would count on the Soviet umbrella to prevent a US and French response against Libya itself.

51. Tunisia's relations with Algeria have improved since the March 1983 resolution of a longstanding border dispute and the signing of a tripartite treaty with Algeria and Mauritania. To dissuade potential

Libyan aggression, Tunis has fully publicized exchanges of military delegations with Algeria, one aspect of the improving relations. Nevertheless, Tunisia harbors lingering suspicions that Algeria might arrive to help repulse Libya but then be disinclined to leave. Thus, Tunis will proceed on a cautious, incremental path toward closer military ties.

It probably also reassured the Bourguiba regime that Algeria would be supportive in any confrontation with Libya. Tunisia's stability remains an important interest to Algeria. From the Algerian perspective, a Libyan-controlled or -influenced regime in Tunis would upset the Maghreb's balance of power and threaten Algerian efforts to establish regional leadership. Algeria would respond to a Tunisian request for assistance. In times of heightened tensions, the Algerian response might take the form of a military buildup and posturing along the Libyan border. If a threat appeared imminent, token Algerian military deployments—probably the maximum acceptable to Tunisia prior to a Libyan invasion—might be used to signal Algiers' commitment. Rather than accept Libyan domination of Tunisia, Algeria would be prepared for larger scale conflict with Libya. Algiers would probably also anticipate a French and US military response to Libyan aggression against Tunisia.

52. France also has a strong interest in Tunisia's independence and stability. From the French perspective, an invasion of Tunisia would constitute a direct threat to France's southern flank along the Mediterranean littoral. Previous French public statements, the continuing enhancement of quick-reaction intervention forces, detailed military contingency planning, and the pattern of routine French military deployments all signal a willingness to confront challenges to vital French interests in Africa, especially the Mediterranean littoral. France will use its political and economic assets, to the extent possible, to encourage Tunisian correction of the basic inequities that breed discontent. As Tunisia's principal trading partner, France enjoys significant financial leverage over the Bourguiba regime or any successor government. In the event of internal Tunisian disorders which challenge the capacities of the security and military establishments, France would be prepared to deploy forces tailored to Tunisia's most pressing security requirements. In the event of a Libyan invasion, France would employ its armed forces to repulse any overt attack on Tunisia.

53. The USSR's principal interest in Tunisia is to neutralize Tunisia's pro-Western orientation and to

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maintain and expand its access to port facilities—part of an overall objective of seeking expanded access to air and naval facilities in the region. This would enhance its capability to maintain naval deployments in the Mediterranean, to maneuver its naval forces in crisis situations, and to support friendly forces with airlifts and sealifts. The Soviets must view the Bourguiba succession issue as well as continuing domestic problems as an opportunity to advance Soviet political and military interests. Although overt Soviet destabilization efforts are not evident, Moscow would benefit from the damage to Western interests which might proceed from a radical change of regime in Tunisia. From this perspective, Libyan subversive activities also serve their longer term interests. At the same time, the Soviets would probably discourage any Libyan military operation that might escalate to a confrontation with France, much less the United States; the gains would not be worth the inherent risks. Moscow would probably take diplomatic and military steps to signal Tunisia's allies that an attack on Libya itself could lead to escalation. Nevertheless, Moscow would have great difficulty in opposing any Western military operations in Libya because of Soviet difficulty in projecting power against significant opposition beyond the range of its land-based aircraft.

Succession to Bourguiba

54. In 1975 Bourguiba was named President for Life; normally the president and National Assembly are elected concurrently for five-year terms. The question of Bourguiba's successor has been the key political issue in Tunisia for years, but the President long vacillated over the mechanism for succession. In 1976, he sponsored a constitutional amendment that specified that the prime minister will assume the presidency, upon Bourguiba's death or incapacitation, for the unexpired term of the National Assembly then in session. Thereafter, presidential candidates for a new term must be approved by a government commission and compete in a nationwide general election. In effect, Bourguiba established a legal means to ensure that his designated successor will become president. Upon the President's death, the heir will have time—up to five years—to consolidate his power base before facing an electoral challenge. This process is opposed by those Tunisians who desire basic structural reforms in society; however, Bourguiba, intent upon preserving his legacy, is unlikely to relax control over this vital process.

Potential Successors and Likely Policies

55. Within the near term, Prime Minister Mzali is the strongest candidate as Bourguiba's replacement,

provided the constitutional process operates. Should Mzali fail to retain the Prime Ministry, Bourguiba will draw his replacement from candidates with solid PSD credentials. In this event, possible alternatives include Minister of Public Works and Housing Mohamed Sayah, PSD Director Hedi Baccouche, and Foreign Minister Beji Caid Essebsi. It is noteworthy that all Prime Ministers have been from Monastir, the President's hometown. Prominent political figures from non-PSD ranks, such as MDS Secretary General Ahmed Mestiri, will have to await the post-Bourguiba era before they can compete for Tunisia's leadership. In the long term—and assuming significant liberalization of the political process—one of the Islamic fundamentalists, such as Rachid Ghannouchi or Abdelfatah Mourou, could conceivably become an electoral contender.

56. In the aftermath of the riots, Mzali's tenure as Prime Minister initially appeared in question; however, President Bourguiba has reaffirmed his support for Mzali. It would seem that Mzali's continuance in office was partly the result of a lack of better candidates. His position has been enhanced by the support of Habib Bourguiba, Jr., who has opted out of the presidential contention. The son's role as presidential adviser provides Mzali with an important buffer in his dealings with the President. During 1983-84, Mzali strengthened his position within the government, replacing key opponents or competitors with his own cadre. Mzali and Habib, Jr., have managed the ouster of most of the prominent allies of the President's wife, Wassila. The Prime Minister, who retains control of the important Interior Minister portfolio, now chairs the National Defense Council, reactivated in July 1984, which is charged with implementing the President's policies in national defense and state security.

57. Barring a serious miscalculation or a mishandled outbreak of violence, Mzali is likely to retain Bourguiba's confidence. If the President were to die prior to November 1986 (when the National Assembly's term ends), Mzali would face immediate and serious challenges to his presidency. The longer Bourguiba lives, the more time Mzali has to build his personal power base; however, in the absence of societal reform, the pressures for change will also build and cannot be restrained indefinitely.

58. In the event Mzali loses the Prime Ministry, one of the other PSD candidates is likely to get the post. Each has strengths and weaknesses that affect their

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prospects. Sayah, recently returned from quasi-exile as Ambassador to Italy and restored to the PSD Political Bureau, is from Monastir and is a longtime protege of the President; however, he would be unacceptable to the trade union movement and liberal Tunisians who remember him as a ruthless authoritarian as Interior Minister. Mzali opposed Sayah's reappointment to the Cabinet. Foreign Minister Caid Essebsi was only peripherally involved with the grain subsidies decision and is not tainted by that episode; however, he is related to the Tunis clans, not those of the Sahel. As a confidant of Wassila Bourguiba, Caid Essebsi is opposed by Mzali and Habib, Jr. Finally, Baccouche, who has admirers within government and opposition ranks, is considered a man of principle and has excellent credentials as a socialist reformer; however, he lacks a political power base. Given time, Baccouche, who has Bourguiba's mandate to revitalize the moribund PSD, could use this position to build broad-based support.

59. Whether Mzali or some other PSD figure is Prime Minister, there is little prospect for fundamental reform as long as Bourguiba remains in control. Even after Bourguiba passes from the scene, conservative elements within the establishment will oppose changes that affect their vested interests. Nevertheless, change is inevitable in the post-Bourguiba era; it is only a question of a revolutionary or evolutionary process. The power the President has long monopolized will have to be shared more broadly by his successor; to ensure a peaceful evolution, the effects will have to be felt beyond the existing elite. Prime Minister Mzali, who was instrumental in the limited political liberalization that has occurred, has a reputation for dialogue with dissidents rather than repression. Provided opposition movements were willing to work within the legal framework, Mzali would probably accept—up to a point—the legalization of additional parties and a broadening of the channels of dissent. On the other hand, he would respond vigorously to opponents operating outside the law. Sayah, who has a reputation for ruthlessness and a willingness to use extralegal means and force, probably would adopt a harder line toward liberalization. All these PSD personalities probably realize the necessity for some domestic reforms.

60. Tunisia's relations with France and the United States would not change substantially under Mzali or any other PSD successor. Although no successor could afford to be as openly pro-West as Bourguiba had been, political reality will force the next President to rely upon and maintain relations—if less public—with Tunisia's traditional friends. There are no indications

that any of the likely successors would pursue a course detrimental to US and Western interests: suspicious of the USSR run deep and will restrict improvements in Soviet-Tunisian relations. Mzali and the others are all seasoned politicians and will remain wary of Libya; however, all would probably prefer normal relations with Qadhafi and a reduction in the threat he poses. With the increasing influence of Islamic and non-aligned sentiment among the Tunisian populace, any successor will have to adhere closely to the broad Arab consensus on regional issues. While Tunisia is likely to remain a voice of moderation in Arab and nonaligned forums and align itself with moderate Arab states, it may also distance itself from the United States and become more critical of US policies.

61. An alternative view³ holds that this Estimate underestimates the degree to which cooperation with the United States will weaken if Bourguiba is succeeded by Mzali. A weak successor regime would have to give additional emphasis to the Arab and nonaligned aspects of its foreign policy, making some decisions inimical to US interests, because of growing popular opposition to US policies and increased vulnerability to Libyan pressure. [redacted] says that these attitudes derive from widespread perceptions of a US bias toward Israel.

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The Role of the Military

62. There are differing views within the Intelligence Community on the prospects for direct participation in the political process by the Tunisian armed forces. The majority view is presented in paragraphs 63-68. The minority view⁴ is presented in paragraphs 69 and 70.

63. **Majority View.** Since independence Bourguiba has maintained tight civilian control of the armed forces and kept them apolitical. The January 1984 riots again highlighted the Army's importance as the ultimate guarantor of the regime. As an institution, the Army emerged from the riots with its prestige and credibility intact. Trusted Army officers, whose origins are in the Sahel, have been placed in command of the Interior Ministry's forces. The National Guard has been reorganized and its crisis intervention units reportedly strengthened; similar measures to upgrade

³ The holders of this view are the Deputy Director for Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, and the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

⁴ The holders of this view are the Deputy Director for Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, and the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

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the other security forces are presumed to be under way. These improvements should reduce the requirement for immediate military intervention, provided the government reacts quickly to any new disturbances. Although uneasy with riot-control duties, the military will obey orders from the government, whoever the leader, to restore civil order—if the politicians do not precipitate repeated crises by mismanagement.

64. Military leaders, especially the senior and middle grade officers, are taking a greater interest in politics but will remain reluctant to become involved in politics. Should Prime Minister Mzali effect a transition to the Presidency and retain control, the military will not become involved in domestic politics.

65. A second scenario, which we judge less likely, involves a decline in stability while Bourguiba is still in control. The resulting turmoil will cause the military leaders concern as they equate instability with an increased threat, overt as well as subversive, from Libya. They fear that, if the Army were tied down in riot control, it would enhance the prospects for Libyan operations. If the military were required to use massive force repeatedly to restore order, its leaders might put pressure on the President to replace Prime Minister Mzali. If the leadership sheds its aversion to political involvement, it might assume the role of power brokers.

66. A third scenario involves Bourguiba's death or incapacitation before Mzali consolidates his position. The resulting power struggles within the elite establishment and discontent within the population could precipitate widespread civil unrest. If the military were employed repeatedly to rectify the failures of inadequate civilian leadership, the senior officers might decide to take over the government to restore stability to Tunisia. They might also conceivably place their support behind some civilian figure with a charismatic, forceful personality; however, no contender who meets such a requirement and who would be widely acceptable has yet emerged.

67. A fourth scenario involves a prolonged power struggle in the post-Bourguiba era which weakens government control. In the event of widespread disturbances, a military leader or group from the junior officer ranks might lead a revolt. There would probably be little forewarning of such an attempt. A government headed by more youthful Army officers would almost certainly prove more radical than one led by senior military leaders.

68. As long as the transition of power in Tunisia is legal and proceeds smoothly, the role of the military will remain minimal. In the face of inadequate civilian leadership or prolonged instability, the military may eventually feel compelled to act. Given the presence of Army officers in key positions in the internal security establishment, the military is in a potentially excellent position to become the dominant element in choosing Tunisia's next leader. At this time, no single military officer commands broad-based support among his fellow officers. This fact and the Army's apolitical tradition reduce the likelihood of military intervention, unless the political environment deteriorates dramatically.

69. **Minority View.**⁵ The Tunisian military has traditionally been apolitical in large part due to political stability, government benefits and privileges bestowed on senior officers, and President Bourguiba's determination to keep the armed forces out of politics. We agree that Bourguiba's death almost certainly will further undermine an already unstable political climate, but believe that this Estimate underestimates the prospects for direct participation in the political process by the Tunisian armed forces.

70. Only the armed forces appear to have sufficient strength and cohesion to fill the post-Bourguiba leadership vacuum by playing a more active behind-the-scenes role or even by taking over the government. Prime Minister Mzali recognizes this and has begun maneuvering for the loyalty of the armed forces. Officers and enlisted men reportedly sympathize with the popular mood, however, and have little faith in his leadership. Such sentiments increasingly are also creating a climate conducive to coup plotting by junior and midlevel officers.

Outlook

71. Although Tunisian leaders like Mzali and Habib Bourguiba, Jr., recognize the need for reform, they are unwilling to confront Bourguiba and press for change. They appear resigned to await the President's demise.

In the interim, they will adopt measures designed to appear responsive to public grievances; however, the President's control will preclude more

⁵ The holders of this view are the Deputy Director for Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, and the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

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than superficial changes. These measures will be likely to include some limited political liberalization and the diversion of some resources to neglected sectors of the economy and country. The leaders will try to avoid actions that might trigger new disturbances but will respond vigorously to any public order threats. Whatever the regime attempts, the nation's youthful majority is likely to perceive it as too little, too late. Given Bourguiba's inflexibility, the subservience of his officials, and the decline in societal institutions, Tunisia's future is likely to be increasingly turbulent.

72. With careful calculation, the regime may manage to temporize for one or two more years; however, it probably cannot sustain this approach into the late 1980s. Within the two-year period of this Estimate, it is extremely unlikely that any government not dominated by the Destourian Socialist Party could evolve via legal processes. Such a regime could emerge from serious domestic unrest or external interference. Although many variables complicate projections of Tunisia's future course, several scenarios, in descending order of probability, are hypothesized:

- Mzali succeeds to the presidency but faces serious challenges to his tenure. His capacity to enact needed reforms expeditiously is constrained by conservative elements who prefer the status quo. Pressure for change continues to build, awaiting only a catalytic event to release pent-up frustration.
- If Bourguiba's death does not occur in the near term, the very fact of his demise may provide the catalytic event that sparks widespread violence.
- If faced with frequent employment against the civilian populace, senior military leaders may decide to take over the government on an interim basis. Ill equipped to deal with Tunisia's pressing problems, they might attempt to forge a broad-based national unity government embracing cooperative PSD figures as well as those from significant opposition movements.
- During a period of instability, the Islamic fundamentalists, in cooperation with other opposition parties and movements, might attempt to form a national unity government or declare an Islamic state. The populace would probably rally to this cause and the military and internal security forces might not be able to control the situation.
- Faced with using massive force against their countrymen, elements within the military might rebel, either withdrawing from action or supporting the demonstrators.

— An armed uprising by Libyan-sponsored Tunisian dissidents would require some Libyan involvement as these elements lack broad-based support. This need not include an invasion on the ground. A completely unprovoked Libyan invasion appears a less probable course of action.

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73. From the US perspective, the best eventuality would be a peaceful transition to a constitutional successor government dedicated to reforming Tunisian society and correcting inequities. Such a government may come into existence but not survive long enough to enact reforms. A government of national unity that embraces a broad spectrum of Tunisian support would be an acceptable alternative; however, such a government would have great difficulty operating effectively on a long-term basis. Both the constitutional successor and national unity governments would probably be inclined toward a more nonaligned posture, at least publicly, vis-a-vis the United States.

74. A military-controlled government might prove the only one capable of ensuring stability; however, it would be less desirable than a civilian regime. The accession of an Islamic fundamentalist government would not be as positive a development as it would act to reduce Western influences and attitudes. Nevertheless, it would probably prove less deleterious to US interests than a radical leftist regime, especially one dominated or influenced by Libya. An Islamic government probably would not be prone to turn to the USSR or the radical Arab states for support. An eventual modus vivendi with the United States and the West should be possible, provided the United States were not perceived as hostile to the new regime.

75. Finally, the seizure of power by a patently anti-West regime would impact adversely on US interests in the Maghreb and beyond. Such a development would be widely perceived as a severe blow to US prestige and policies. Should such a regime perceive itself weak and threatened by the United States and the West, it might turn to the USSR for assistance, with ominous implications for US and Western security interests.

76. Given Tunisia's uncertain future, the United States will face difficult policy choices:

- A US policy aimed at bolstering the Bourguiba regime might be construed as a sign of US

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antipathy toward Tunisians who seek basic reforms. At the same time, US efforts to maintain contact with Tunisian opposition groups might anger the regime, which could perceive the United States as wavering in its support and hedging its bets.

- US support for the Bourguiba regime in a time of domestic turmoil could provoke widespread anti-American feelings—which were not evident in the January 1984 riots.
- On the other hand, failure to back Bourguiba or his constitutional successor could undermine the

regime and make it more vulnerable to collapse. It could also call into question the credibility of the US commitment to its friends.

- A US policy aimed at closer military cooperation with Tunisia in regional security affairs could also be counterproductive, given the disenchantment of many Tunisians with US Middle East policies. Such a policy could further weaken a regime whose foundations are already shaky. It would increase Libyan antipathy toward Tunisia and would be likely to trouble Algeria, which remains suspicious about the ultimate intent of US-Moroccan military cooperation.

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ANNEX A

INSTABILITY INDICATORS

- [] substantial decline in President Bourguiba's physical or mental capacities which affects government decisionmaking or his personal control of Tunisia. 25X1
- Decline in Tunisia's economic status which causes the government to impose further austerity measures or creates more unemployment.
- Increase in public protests, especially spontaneous demonstrations of discontent with government policies or senior leadership.
- Increase in labor unrest, especially wildcat strikes or other evidence that union leadership is losing control over rank and file.
- [] more radical, violence-prone individuals are gaining ascendancy over the moderate leaders of the Islamic fundamentalist movement. 25X1
- [] the armed forces are becoming politicized, particularly at the junior officer, NCO, or enlisted levels. 25X1
- [] senior and middle grade military and internal security officers are becoming disaffected with the regime. 25X1
- Increase in indiscriminate repressive measures by government against dissenters which affects innocent bystanders.
- Liberalization of political process which proves cosmetic, allowing increased opportunities for dissent to be voiced without impacting governmental policies and decisions.
- [] terrorist, sabotage, or assassination campaigns by Libyan-backed Tunisian dissidents. 25X1
- [] opposition efforts to exploit or foment class hatreds. 25X1
- [] educated and professional classes are beginning to emigrate. 25X1

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